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Weekend, December 2-4, 2016 www.metro.us | t: MetroPhilly | f: MetroPhilly

Can Eagles locate their missing pass rush? 22

WINTER MOVIES ARE HERE

From 'Star Wars' to'Jackie,' there's a film for everyone. 16-19

OneRepublic stopped at Zahav this week. 20-21

TICKET TUSSLE

It's local lawyer vs. parking authority in court battle over $51 ticket. 2

SAM NEWHOUSE

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1. What did a nurse who works for a pediatrician in Montgomery County accuse the doctor of giving her, according to police?

2. How many sacks have the Eagles gotten over their last five games?

3. What Shakespeare film did "Assassin's Creed" stars Michael Fassbender and Marion Cotillard act in last year?

3 things you need to know

GRIM HOLLANDE SAYS HE WON'T SEEK SECOND TERM AS FRENCH PRESIDENT

1 President Francois Hollande shocked France on Thursday by announcing he would not seek a second term next year, acknowledging his deep unpopularity and making way for another leftist candidate to take on conservative Francois Fillon and far-right leader Marine Le Pen.

The surprise announcement — effectively an admission that by running again he would hurt his party's chances — marks the first time since France's fifth Republic was created in 1958 that an incumbent president has not sought a second mandate. "I am aware today of the risk that going down a route that would not gather sufficient support would entail, so I have decided not to be a candidate in the presidential election," a somber-looking Hollande said in a televised address. Dogged by high unemployment, Hollande is the least popular president in French polling history, yet his closest aides had consistently said he would run. REUTERS

POLICE: SON DISMEMBERS PARENTS, DISSOLVED BODIES IN ACID

2 Authorities have arrested a 28-year-old man accused of stabbing his parents to death, dismembering their bodies, and trying to dissolve pieces of their body in acid in an attempt to destroy evidence. Joel Michael Guy, Jr. was arrested at his apartment in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and charged with two counts of first degree murder. Police say he visited his parents for Thanksgiving at their home in Knoxville, Tennessee and may have snapped after his parents told him they were going to financially cut him off.

REUTERS

DELTA PILOTS GET 30 PERCENT RAISE OVER THREE YEARS IN NEW CONTRACT

3 Delta Air Lines pilots voted to approve a contract delivering a 30 percent raise over three years as the aviation industry faces widespread demand for higher wages to fly planes at a time of large profits. The contract also allows the pilots to keep existing gains on profit sharing. Eighty-two percent of pilots who voted approved the deal, with 95 percent of eligible pilots voting, according to Delta's unit of the Air Line Pilots Association, International. The approval comes after pilots rejected a tentative agreement last year, which some said offered wage increases at the expense of more lucrative profit-sharing.

REUTERS

SAM NEWHOUSE

Philly attorney summons fellow citizens to join 'war' against PPA

Lawyer says PPA may have illegally levied millions in fines.

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"Parking Wars" is about to get real.

In Philadelphia, the anger everyone feels at the sight of a parking ticket tucked under a windshield wiper became the basis for A&E reality show "Parking Wars."

On Thursday, local lawyer Michael Coard declared war against the Philadelphia Parking Authority.

The authority fired the first shot nine months ago when it ticketed Coard's car. The skirmish — over a $51 ticket —has escalated to an ongoing court battle.

"Everybody has been victimized by the vulture known as the Philadelphia Parking Authority!" Coard declared through a bullhorn outside the PPA's administrative offices at Ninth and Filbert streets at a news conference around noon. "We can destroy the monster!"

Calling the PPA "a money-generating scam," Coard is offering free legal assistance to Philadelphians who will join his effort to abolish the organization.

Coard's quest began over a $51 parking ticket the peeved attorney received in March 2016 when he parked his car on an unmetered section of Conshohocken Avenue in Wynnefield.

His car was parked between a standard "No Parking — Bus Zone" sign, but not in the bus zone outline painted on the street with a white X through it.

Although some think you cannot park past the pole, Coard argued that the law actually only restricts parking in the painted rectangle, an.

After his appeal of the ticket was rejected by a hearing officer, as well as an administrative review officer, he paid $200 to take the issue to the Court of Common Pleas. On Nov. 3, a judge ruled in Coard's favor, reversing the ticket. The PPA is now appealing that decision to an appellate court.

"The PPA is concerned about safety issues related to the picking up and discharging of bus passengers," a PPA spokesman said via email. They did not comment on Coard's other claims.

But they may be hearing more about them soon.

Coard believes he can waken a "sleeping giant" by uniting those who have received what may have been illegal tickets.

He urged the public to contact his office if they have received unfair tickets. He offered to provide pro bono legal services and advice contesting tickets, with an eye toward possibly filing a class action lawsuit against the PPA.

Once you call his office, "You're part of the team. You're part of the army, you're involved in the war, and we're going to defeat that bureaucratic bully," Coard promised.

If Coard's vision becomes a reality, it would be another gut punch for the embattled agency.

The PPA, long described as a patronage mill by the Inquirer, was embroiled in scandal recently after it was revealed the agency paid-off female employees to hush up claims of sexual harassment by disgraced former PPA boss Vince Fenerty.

Attorney general-elect Josh Shapiro has vowed to audit the agency's books as soon as he takes office in January.

Coard acknowledged most people don't have the time or money to fight their tickets as he did. And he calculated that the PPA could have collected as much as $12 million in potentially illegal fines over the past decade for tickets like the one he so far has beaten.

"That money is taken from people who don't have $51 to pay," Coard said. "They're breaking the law."

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BRIEF

Reports: Death of boy, 2, ruled homicide

The death of a Kensington toddler, whose body police described as bruised, was determined to be a homicide, authorities said Thursday morning.

Philadelphia police responded to a home on the 600 block of East Clementine Street just before midnight on Tuesday, where officers found a 2-year-old boy, Zyair Worrell, unresponsive, according to police.

A woman, 23, who identified herself as Zyair's mother, was holding the toddler, and the woman's 21-year-old boyfriend was also in the residence at the time.

The boy was taken to St. Christopher's Hospital, where he was pronounced dead just after 2 a.m. Wednesday.

An examination of the boy's body revealed a large laceration of his liver, bruising on his chest and right ear and an abrasion on his eye. The boy also tested positive for THC, the principal psychoactive ingredient found in marijuana.

INSTAGRAM/@KSMITH4900

Homicide detectives are investigating the boy's death as a child abuse case, according to 6ABC.

The boy's father, Khajir Smith, expressed his grief over the loss of his son in a message posted Wednesday afternoon on Facebook.

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William Tucker is charged with pro-Donald Trump graffiti found in South Philly. PPD

Police: NJ man charged in election-night Trump graffiti

An anonymous tip led to the arrest after police released surveillance video of the incident.

SAM NEWHOUSE
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Police on Thursday announced an arrest in one of the many acts of graffiti related to the election of Donald Trump that have occurred around Philadelphia.

William Tucker, 58, or Lawnside, New Jersey, is charged with tagging messages about Trump on South Sixth Street, just south of Christian Street, at around 5 a.m. on Nov. 9, just hours after the billionaire candidate won the presidency.

Surveillance video showed the suspect bending over a vehicle while tagging the hood of the car with the message "Trump Rules Black Bitch." Other vehicles and homes were also vandalized, some with the words "Trump Rules," police said.

An anonymous tipster identified Tucker after police released surveillance video from the incident to the news media.

Police arrested Tucker last week, but didn't announce the arrest until Thursday. There was no information as to whether he has obtained a lawyer who could comment on the charges on his behalf.

Police have not charged any suspects with other Trump-related graffiti that included swastikas spray-painted the night of the election a few blocks away near Broad and Wharton streets.

A Philadelphia assistant city attorney has been linked to "F— Trump" graffiti spray-painted recently on a Chestnut Hill grocery store.

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Officers search for the suspects of a mass shooting December 2, 2015 in San Bernardino, California. GETTY IMAGES

A year after San Bernardino attack, investigators still seek answers

It was one of the deadliest attacks by militants in the United States since the Sept. 11, 2001, hijacked plane attacks.

One year after two Islamic militants shot dead 14 people in a massacre in Southern California, FBI investigators are still seeking to answer key questions such as the location of the married couple's computer hard drive and whether anyone helped them, an official said.

Syed Rizwan Farook, 28, and his wife, Tashfeen Malik, 29, opened fire on Dec. 2 during a party and training session for San Bernardino County employees, who were co-workers of Farook, injuring 22 people in addition to the 14 killed.

Authorities have said that U.S.-born Farook and Malik, a native of Pakistan who lived most of her life in Saudi Arabia, were inspired by Islamic extremism. The couple, who were parents of a 6-month-old daughter, both died in a shootout with police four hours after the massacre.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation is still seeking to determine if anyone assisted the couple, such as in financing the attack or helping to plan for it, FBI spokeswoman Laura Eimiller said.

"While we have not charged anyone with providing support to Farook and Malik, we certainly will continue to investigate to determine if they were supported in any way," she said in a telephone interview.

To that end, the FBI is still hoping to find the hard drive from the couple's computer, Eimiller said. REUTERS

BRIEF

Donate to Metro's Toy Drive

In keeping with the holiday spirit of giving, Metro is once again launching Metro Magic, our annual toy drive for underprivileged children in New York, Boston and Philadelphia.

This year marks the seventh anniversary of the toy drive, which was renamed in memory of the man who oversaw the project for more than four years, Tony Metcalf, Metro's longest-running editor in chief. Mr. Metcalf passed away in 2013 from colon cancer at the age of 50.

Mr. Metcalf lit up every year as he saw the faces of children unwrap their holiday gifts. It is our goal to keep that magic alive.

"Tony felt we should use the size and scale of Metro to help others and he used enormous dedication and force to execute the project and every year make children in need a little happier during the holiday season," said Metro's Chief Executive Officer Yggers Mortensen.

"I am proud to continue this project in honor of Tony and I hope all our readers, suppliers and members of the Metro team will help to make this yet another great Metro Magic year."

Metro has created a wish list at the Target website that readers can access by going to Metro.us and clicking on the Tony's Metro Magic story on the homepage.

From there, just choose the toys you wish to donate, pay online using Target's secure payment system, and your gifts, along with your name attached, will be delivered to Metro's offices in each city.

This season, we hope you will remember the children who will spend the holidays in shelters or who may not have gifts to open. Even one small gift can make a big difference in a child's holiday season.

It's good to receive a gift. It's better to give one. METRO

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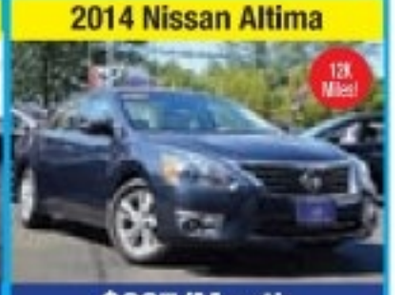

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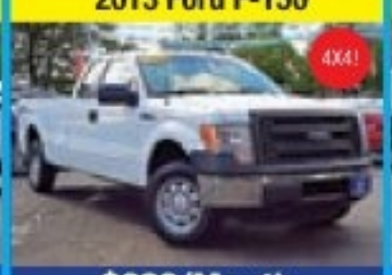

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New groove of 'Hamilton'

Some of the music world's biggest stars dropped by Broadway to drop the "Hamilton Mixtape."

T. MICHELLE MURPHY
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Andra Day brought the house to its feet with "Burn." PROVIDED

It's not an unusual sight to see hundreds of fans packing the sidewalk outside the Richard Rodgers Theatre, home to "Hamilton." But it was especially busy on Thursday, and these fans weren't crowded around the stage door.

Lining 46th Street past Eighth Avenue, they were among the lucky fans who heard the announcement late Wednesday night: The new "Hamilton Mixtape" album — which brings together some of the biggest names in the music business spanning genres from rap to indie rock to cover the musical's best-selling soundtrack — was having a preview concert with 1,300 free seats to fill.

Though no one knew what to expect from the half-hour presentation when the lucky few filed inside, many of whom had probably never made it into the room where it happens before given high ticket prices and the fact that the show's been sold out for years. DJs !llmind and J.Period, who also produced the album, played a set (audience members danced in their seats) before the show began.

"The goal was to take the emotion of the original tracks and bump them up in terms of intensity," !llmind tells us about producing four tracks for the album. "That's kind of what I specialize in, and for each one of these, it was about studying the originals, really understanding the message of the original songs, and then the mood in the music, and then kind of doing my best to kick those up a notch without overpowering the vocalists."

> *"The goal was to take the emotion of the original tracks and bump them up in terms of intensity."*
> !llmind

J.Period saw the challenge of producing the album as taking the music out of the context of Broadway. Though different in many ways, the two albums still have something in common. "On Broadway, it's all about the narrative; on the mixtape, you're combining narrative with flow. People are asking why did you put the songs in this order: This is what it's supposed to be. You pop it in, you press play, and you experience the whole thing as one entity."

When the lights finally went down, the familiar chords for a remixed "My Shot" filled the room, performed by rapper Joell Ortiz and Black Thought of The Roots. "I wanted to make sure I expressed how important it is to be American, to express how you feel and take the credit," Ortiz tells us of the rap he wrote for the song, Alexander Hamilton's anthem. "'Debt: Who do you owe most? You.' In this verse, [I] let people know they can take anything into their own hands.

"I come from the projects in Brooklyn where people don't believe that. And it's wrong, 'cause some of the smartest people I know, some of the most creative people I know, are in those poverty-stricken projects."

The concert also included performances by Regina Spektor, whose soulful "Dear Theodosia" was the first song recorded for the "Mixtape," and Andra Day's crackling and stylistically branded "Burn" that brought the house to its feet for a standing ovation.

Finally, Ja Rule and Ashanti were reunited for an almost cheeky rendition of "Helpless." Like most of the "Mixtape" contributors, Ja Rule didn't stick completely to the script. Just as Miranda added references from his favorite musicals and rappers to the soundtrack, Ja Rule made the song his own in some small ways.

"I felt that it had to have little changes to make it me, and to make it about me and Ashanti, and to give it a fun feel," he says. "Like, 'We'll get a little place in Queens and we'll figure it out.' Because I'm from Queens."

The "Hamilton Mixtape" is available now digitally and as a CD or cassette (at Miranda's insistence). A vinyl edition is coming soon.

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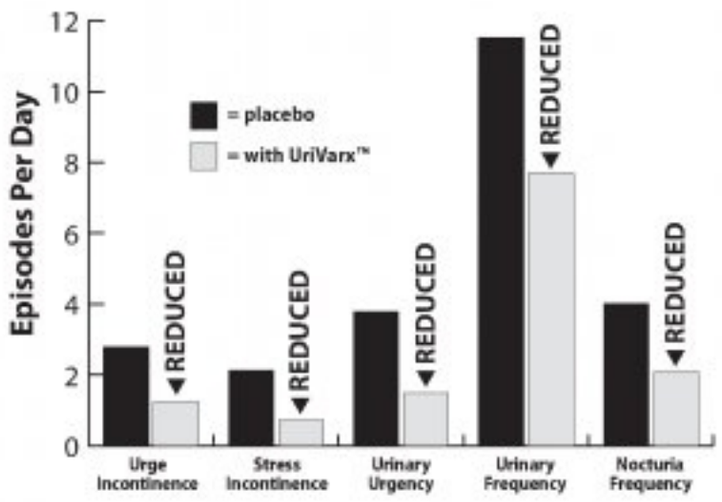

Common Symptoms Cause High Anxiety

According to the National Institute of Health, bladder control issues affect as many as 33 million Americans. Attending social functions or being out of the home can cause anxiety, since proximity to a bathroom is a necessity. Leakage or accidents – even when coughing, laughing, or sneezing – is always a concern. Many people even hesitate drinking the necessary amount of fluids, for fear of triggering an urgent episode, which can lead to dehydration and other health concerns. While adult diapers offer some help, this can be a real stigma for people. After all, many people suffering urinary symptoms don't even tell their spouse or family about it.

A Breakthrough 15 Years in the Making

These quality of life issues are what inspired Dr. Tracey Seipel, one of the world's leading experts in natural urological healthcare, to find a safe, effective solution for urinary complaints. She single-handedly pioneered the bladder care category in the early 2000's, receiving an award from the prestigious U.S. Nutrition Business Journal for her work.

Her new *UriVarx*™ formula, manufactured by Innovus Pharmaceuticals, has been 15 years in the making. Its synergistic combination of Crateva, Horsetail, and Lindera launches a three-pronged assault on urinary symptoms by supporting bladder and kidney health, as well as revitalizing bladder tone and function. It's already been used successfully by over 1.5 million people in US.

"Overactive bladder syndrome is a widespread problem," says Dr. Seipel. "*UriVarx*™ promotes normal urinary frequency and reduces urgency nocturia, and those embarrassing away-from-home bladder accidents in just 8 weeks of use." She added, "The formula works equally well for both men and women."

"*UriVarx*™ invigorates the tone of the bladder wall, promoting a healthy level of firmness by enhancing the bladder's muscular elasticity. This reduces the frequent urge to urinate," Dr. Seipel explained.

Users Love Their New Sense of Freedom

When people are experiencing symptoms of urinary incontinence, leakage, and urgency, they can't afford to wait for relief. They want to continue with their day-to-day activities without worrying about embarrassing accidents. With relief offered in as little as 60 days, *UriVarx*™ gives hope to millions of people who've lived with interrupted sleep, frequent trips to the bathroom, and the need for adult diapers.

Glenda B., a 78-year old retired teacher, used to wear adult diapers every day to guard against accidents. "My bladder capacity was good, but the leakage and accidents would occur without warning. So I wore them every day," confessed Glenda.

Fortunately, she found relief with *UriVarx*™. "After only 60 days on *UriVarx*™, I reduced the need to wear my diapers. Now I'm managing very well."

David M, age 46, had a different issue. "I had to go to the toilet at least four times per night." Eight weeks after starting *UriVarx*™, David said, "My trips to the toilet have definitely been reduced, and I'm having much better sleep, getting up maybe once a night."

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Starbucks CEO steps down to focus on high-end coffee, shares dip

Howard Schultz GETTY IMAGES

Starbucks signaled the change in July, saying that Schultz was moving away from day-to-day operations to focus on the development of high-end stores and long-term growth.

Starbucks Corp. on Thursday said Howard Schultz will step down as chief executive to focus on its high-end coffee shops as Chief Operating Officer Kevin Johnson takes over as CEO.

Starbucks signaled the change in July, saying that Schultz was moving away from day-to-day operations to focus on the development of high-end stores and long-term growth.

The announcement on Thursday comes as investors worry that growth at the company is cooling from its red-hot levels. Starbucks shares were down 3.9 percent at $56.25 in after-market trading on Thursday.

Schultz has been the shareholders' darling at the Seattle-based company. When he returned in 2008 for his second stint as CEO, the stock was trading below $10. Late last year it hit an all-time high above $60.

Johnson is a former technology executive who became president and chief operating officer at Starbucks in March 2015. He will take over as CEO of the company on April 3, 2017, Starbucks said in a statement.

Johnson has been on the Starbucks board since 2009 but most of his career was in the technology industry.

"Not having retail experience could be a problem over time," said Howard Penney, an analyst at Hedgeye Risk Management.

On a conference after the announcement, analysts pressed the company on timing and whether, with Schultz stepping aside, senior management still had the "merchant" gene.

"I'm not leaving the company and I'm here every day," said Schultz, adding that he will be focused on building a new franchise within Starbucks.

Store traffic at established stores fell in the last quarter, which Johnson has attributed to a change in the company's loyalty program, and Starbucks forecast a mid-single-digit rise in 2017 same-store sales.

The move increases the focus of the well-regarded Schultz on Starbucks establishing itself at the high end of coffee shops.

"Howard Schultz ... will shift his focus to innovation, design and development of Starbucks Reserve Roasteries around the world, expansion of the Starbucks Reserve retail store format and the company's social impact initiatives," the company said. REUTERS

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- 5th & Chelten Ave. (water reservoir)
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- 7231 Torresdale Ave. – Russo Park
- 2901 Princeton Ave. (Mayfair Rec.)
- 7901 Ridgeway St. (Fox Chase Rec.)
- 8101 Bustleton Ave.
- 2900 Comly Rd. – Palmer Playground
- 1400 Cottman – Pennway & Cottman Ave. (Jardel Rec.)

Mechanical leaf collection will be offered starting November 7th in areas with a heavy concentration of leaves.
For drop-off details and schedules visit PhiladelphiaStreets.com/leaves or call 311.

COLLECTION GUIDELINES

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- Never mix trash or other recyclables with bagged leaves.

Mechanical collection area tips:
- Have leaves ready for collection by 7:00 AM Monday for each week of mechanical collection.
- If possible, move your vehicle to an off-street location on your scheduled collection day.
- Visit **PhiladelphiaStreets.com/leaves** for a full mechanical collection schedule by area.

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THE DEMOCRATS' DARK PATH

TOM FOREMAN

Opinion

CNN's Tom Foreman is the author of the book "My Year of Running Dangerously." @tomforemancnn

Democrats are a lot of things these days: depressed, confused, anxious, stunned and disoriented to name a few. But mainly they are furious; apoplectic that Donald Trump turned reliably blue states red, that the Electoral College has more weight than the popular vote and that even if we see recounts in a state or three, Trump is still almost certainly taking the oath in January.

All that considered, I understand why they are angry. But at Republicans? It seems to me Democrats should be mad at other Democrats; indeed, madder now than they were right after the election. Because as the big name Dems here in D.C. perform their postmortem on the vote, do you know what they are changing to get better results in the future? Almost nothing.

For a couple weeks, it looked like younger Dems with new ideas about the party's future might get some traction. But now, with Nancy Pelosi cruising to re-election as head of the House Dems, it appears the same leadership that pushed relentlessly for Hillary Clinton will remain firmly in charge. This is kind of like the captain and crew of the Titanic being pulled from the icy waters only to immediately be chosen by the rest of the survivors to assume command of the rescue ship.

Remember, old guard Dems marginalized Bernie Sanders and then alienated many of his followers instead of blazing a path for them to get behind their hand-picked candidate. They dismissed warnings about Clinton's poor ratings for likeability and trustworthiness. And they sat blissfully by while working class voters in state after state drifted away from the party of their parents … dismissing those very people as bigots, xenophobes and "deplorables."

Of course these pillars of the party can lay claim to some legislative gains and some big fund raising. But on their watch, both houses of Congress, more governorships, more state legislatures and now the White House all wound up in Republican hands. So trashing Trump may be satisfying, but if Democrats don't seriously call their own leaders on the carpet now, they'll likely have little chance of holding Republicans accountable when it really matters.

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As Trump touts Indiana jobs deal, US factory work seeps overseas

In Indiana alone, employers are eliminating at least 3,660 jobs because they are shifting work to other countries, according to a Reuters analysis of Labor Department filings.

President-elect Donald Trump goes to Indianapolis on Thursday to celebrate a deal that will keep 1,000 factory jobs there, but employers elsewhere in Indiana are laying off five times that many workers because of foreign competition.

The decision by United Technologies Corp's Carrier unit to keep half of the 2,100 Indiana jobs it was to shift to Mexico has allowed Trump to claim credit after he held rallies during his populist campaign promising to revive the industrial base of the United States.

But the author of "The Art of the Deal" will have a lot more dealmaking to do if he wants to stop the steady erosion of manufacturing jobs from the country due to automation and lower costs abroad.

Some 960 workers employed by five companies in Indiana are losing their jobs because their U.S. employers are not able to compete with cheaper imported goods, filings show.

Some of those facing job cuts said they did not expect Trump to intervene on their behalf, but they will expect him to take broader steps to protect factory work.

"If in four years it's the same old crap that's going on we'll give another candidate a shot," said Michael Mobley, whose employer, Aurora Casket, eliminated 35 jobs in September and plans to cut another 35 jobs next year as it shifts work to Mexico from Aurora, Indiana.

President-elect Donald Trump speaks to workers at Carrier air conditioning and heating on Thursday in Indianapolis, Indiana. GETTY IMAGES

"If in four years it's the same old crap that's going on we'll give another candidate a shot." Mobley

As elsewhere in the United States, factory work in Indiana has lagged as the broader economy has recovered from the 2008-2009 recession. Manufacturing employment is down 7.4 percent from January 2007 levels even as total employment in the state has risen 3 percent since then, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Nationwide, manufacturing employment is down 12.5 percent since 2007, according to the bureau.

Carrier faced harsh scrutiny after it announced in February that it was eliminating 1,400 jobs at an Indianapolis plant that makes heating and air conditioning units, and another 700 jobs at a United Technologies factory in Huntington, Indiana.

On the campaign trail, Trump turned the Carrier layoffs into a symbol of working-class frustration, promising that he would rebuild a manufacturing base that has been eroded over the past three decades.

Trump and his vice president-elect, Indiana Governor Mike Pence, worked out an agreement with United Technologies CEO Gregory Hayes that gives the company financial incentives from the state, along with a promise to improve the U.S. business climate.

REUTERS

BRIEF

Trump picks retired Gen. James Mattis for Pentagon chief

Donald Trump will nominate retired General James Mattis to lead the Pentagon, The Washington Post reported on Thursday, choosing a revered figure in the Marine Corps known for his tough talk, distrust of Iran and battlefield experience in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The newspaper said the announcement was likely to be made early next week.

The choice of a seasoned military strategist could be another indication that Trump, a Republican, intends to steer U.S. foreign policy away from Democratic President Barack Obama's increased reliance on U.S. allies to fight Islamist militants and to help deter Russian and Chinese aggression in Europe and Asia.

While the nomination of the 66-year-old Mattis will likely be popular among U.S. forces, many of whom know him by his colorful nickname "Mad Dog," it will have to clear a bureaucratic hurdle.

Because he retired only in 2013, Mattis would need Congress to waive a requirement that a defense secretary be a civilian for at least seven years before taking the top job at the Pentagon.

REUTERS

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Spike in Yellowstone grizzly deaths tied to conflicts with humans

The uptick in bear deaths comes as the Obama administration says the population of roughly 690 bears in and around Yellowstone has come back from the brink of extinction and should be stripped of Endangered Species Act protections.

Wildlife managers at Yellowstone National Park are reporting an unusually high number of grizzly bear deaths, 55, linked to humans this year in a trend believed tied to a growing number of the bruins harming livestock or challenging hunters over freshly killed game.

The plan, proposed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service earlier this year, opens the way for hunting in Wyoming, Montana and Idaho, the Northern Rocky Mountain states that border the park.

The measure is strongly opposed by conservationists and Native American tribes but supported by sportsmen and ranchers who claim the number of conflicts will diminish by targeting bears that bounce hunters off freshly shot game or which harm livestock.

The carcasses of at least 55 Yellowstone area bears have been found so far this year, with most dying from human-related activities, according to figures compiled by the U.S. Geological Survey. Nearly half the grizzlies were killed by government bear managers for preying on cattle, sheep and the like.

Wildlife advocates fear that the final tally for 2016 will exceed the 61 bears known or believed to have died in the Yellowstone area last year, a high in the decades since such moralities have been tracked.

A grizzly bear mother and her cub in Yellowstone National Park. GETTY IMAGES

"The mortalities keep escalating and the population keeps dropping. We don't think now is the time to remove Endangered Species Act protections; we need more time to study these trends."

Sierra Club's Bonnie Rice

That compares to 28 grizzlies known or likely dead in 2014 and 29 in 2013, according to government records.

Gregg Losinksi, member of a federal and state team that oversees Yellowstone grizzlies, said some bears running into conflicts are seeking to expand their range into areas already occupied by humans or other grizzlies.

"As far as we're concerned, the population is maxed out based on the available habitat and we're seeing more and more deaths because of this density," he said.

Conservationists say they are alarmed by the number of Yellowstone area bears that have died in 2016. REUTERS

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Facebook developing AI to flag offensive live videos

Facebook Inc. is working on automatically flagging offensive material in live video streams, building on a growing effort to use artificial intelligence to monitor content, said Joaquin Candela, the company's director of applied machine learning.

The social media company has historically relied mostly on users to report offensive posts, which are then checked by Facebook employees against company "community standards." Decisions on especially thorny content issues that might require policy changes are made by top executives at the company.

Candela told reporters that Facebook increasingly was using artificial intelligence to find offensive material. It is "an algorithm that detects nudity, violence or any of the things that are not according to our policies," he said.

Facebook has been embroiled in a number of content moderation controversies this year. GETTY IMAGES

The company already had been working on using automation to flag extremist video content, as Reuters reported in June.

Now the automated system also is being tested on Facebook Live, the streaming video service for users to broadcast live video.

Using artificial intelligence to flag live video is still at the research stage, and has two challenges, Candela said. "One, your computer vision algorithm has to be fast, and I think we can push there, and the other one is you need to prioritize things in the right way so that a human looks at it, an expert who understands our policies, and takes it down."

Facebook said it also uses automation to process the tens of millions of reports it gets each week, to recognize duplicate reports and route the flagged content to reviewers with the appropriate subject matter expertise.

Chief Executive Officer Mark Zuckerberg in November said Facebook would turn to automation as part of a plan to identify fake news. Ahead of the Nov. 8 election, Facebook users saw fake news reports erroneously alleging that Pope Francis endorsed Donald Trump and that a federal agent who had been investigating Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton was found dead.

However, determining whether a particular comment is hateful or bullying, for example, requires context, the company said.

Yann LeCun, Facebook's director of AI research, declined to comment on using AI to detect fake news, but said in general news feed improvements provoked questions of trade-offs between filtering and censorship, freedom of expressions and decency and truthfulness.

"These are questions that go way beyond whether we can develop AI," said LeCun. "Trade-offs that I'm not well-placed to determine." REUTERS

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Winter movie preview: More than just 'Star Wars'

Behold, Oscar nominee Felicity Jones goes from "The Theory of Everything" to the star of another little movie that could, "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story." LUCAS FILM

We are a divided nation. We're, of course, not talking about the election; we're talking about what movies we each like to see. Thankfully, it's not just comic book movies and cartoons about talking/farting animals. The next few months will truly, and perhaps shockingly, have something for everyone.

MATT PRIGGE

FOR LOVERS OF ENDLESS FRANCHISES

Michael Fassbender finally gets his big video game movie with "Assassin's Creed." KERRY BROWN

There's really only one big franchise this season, and it's a doozy: "Star Wars." No, we're not talking about the breathlessly, maniacally anticipated "Episode 8," which won't arrive till next December. It's **"Rogue One"** (Dec. 16), modestly subtitled as merely "A Star Wars Story." A side tale/prequel to the events of the first "Star Wars," it follows a rag-tag, Force-free group of rebels, led by Felicity Jones' orphaned rapscallion, who steal the plans for the still-being-constructed first Death Star. Better yet, from the looks of it, it's not merely a slavish recreation of the original trilogy. It looks like its own new thing.

Actually, we tell a lie: There is a new film that wants to at least spurn a franchise. That would be **"Assassin's Creed"** (Dec. 21), which attempts to turn a big time video game into the next cinematic cash cow. We can't make heads or tails of the story: Michael Fassbender plays an armed hunter during the Spanish Inquisition — but he's really a guy from the future, sent back into the body of an ancestor, for some reason. Whatever: It's a chance to see Fassbender and Marion Cotillard reunite after last year's brooding "Macbeth" (also directed by Justin Kurzel, as it happens). And any movie with Jeremy Irons, Brendan Gleeson and Charlotte Rampling can't be another stupid video game movie, right?

FOR THOSE WHO LIKE ACTUAL ORIGINAL IDEAS

Emma Stone and Ryan Gosling bust a move in "La La Land." DALE ROBINETTE

Do you enjoy movies not based on already existing sources or attached to an ongoing franchise? Because Hollywood still makes those, sometimes! **"La La Land"** (Dec. 9, limited; Dec. 16 wide) may not be entirely original; it's simply a throwback to the old time musical. But it's one of the few things this season that will make you happy — before it makes you sad. Ryan Gosling and Emma Stone play struggling Los Angelenos who find love and fancy footwork.

Of course, in Hollywood, original ideas aren't always so original. Technically **"Office Christmas Party"** (Dec. 9) counts as something we've technically never seen before, in that no one's made an all-star comedy about a raucous, drug-fueled office holiday party. So does **"Collateral Beauty"** (Dec. 16) which sort of sounds like "A Christmas Carol," only weirder: A depressed Will Smith finds himself visited by the spiritual embodiments of love (Keira Knightley), time (Jacob Latimore) and death (Helen Mirren). **"Why Him?"** (Dec. 23) is simply a mismatched duo comedy with Bryan Cranston and James Franco. And **"Sing"** (Dec. 21), about singing animals, sounds like "Happy Feet" but with more than penguins.

Sometimes an original film, like "Gravity," will birth a slew of copycats. And so we have **"Passengers"** (Dec. 21), which ups the stranded space cadets to two: Jennifer Lawrence and Chris Pratt are accidentally awakened on board a ship sometime well before their destination's been reached. Even a truly rare film, like the children's fantasy-horror-drama **"A Monster Calls"** (Dec. 23) — about a young boy with a dying mom (Felicity Jones again) visited by a story-telling colossus — is based on a book.

J-Law and ... C-Pratt (we guess?) star in "Passengers." COLUMBIA PICTURES

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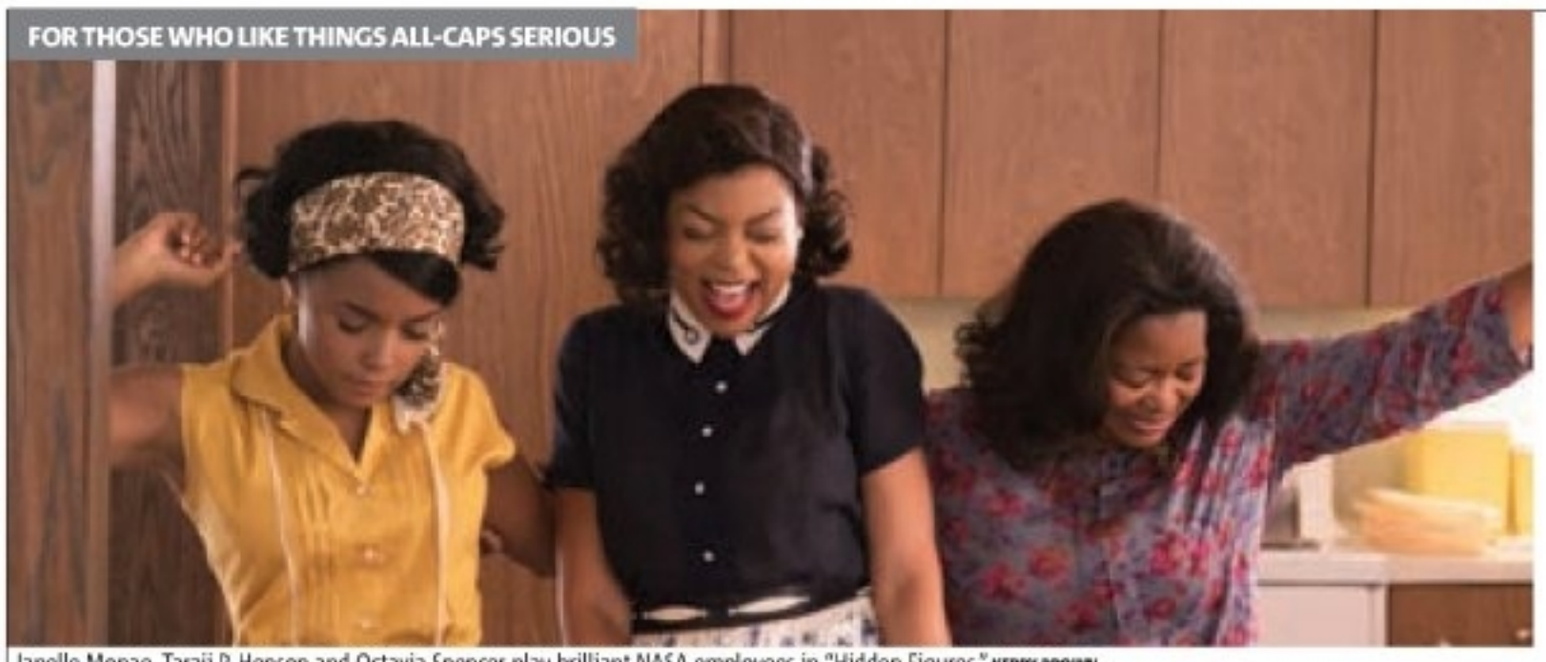

Janelle Monae, Taraji P. Henson and Octavia Spencer play brilliant NASA employees in "Hidden Figures." KERRY BROWN

Remember when Liam Neeson didn't do action movies? He's back to dramas in Martin Scorsese's "Silence." KERRY BROWN

Hollywood doesn't really make big, long, serious adult dramas anymore — unless Martin Scorsese is doing the asking. **"Silence"** (Dec. 23) finds a group of Jesuit priests (including Andrew Garfield and Liam Neeson) undergoing intense torture on their trip to spread the Gospel to anti-Christian 17th century Japan. It will be the second film, after "Hacksaw Ridge," that combines Garfield and unimaginable suffering. But most of all, it's a Martin Scorsese picture, based on a great novel that has already been made into a great 1971 film (now streaming on Filmstruck, as it happens).

Does this sound like Oscar talk? Because 'tis the season for that, too! Another heavy hitter is **"Fences"** (Dec. 28), in which Denzel Washington directs himself and Viola Davis as the fractured couple of August Wilson's prized 1983 play. (Both actors won Tonys for their 2010 Broadway production.) We're assuming **"Patriots Day"** (Dec. 21, limited release) is an Oscar contender, too, since it's about the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing — even though it's the slightly trashier kind of dramas made by Mark Wahlberg and director Peter Berg ("Lone Survivor," "Deepwater Horizon").

There's precious little Oscar talk about **"Live by Night"** (Dec. 25), which is odd since it's Ben Affleck's first directorial bid since Best Picture winner "Argo." Based on a Dennis Lehaine novel, it's a neo-noir that watches as Affleck's anti-hero goes from police captain's son to bootlegger to gangster.

Meanwhile, we're not sure if **"Hidden Figures"** (Dec. 28) qualifies as "all-caps serious." The tale of three African-American women (Taraji P. Henson, Octavia Spencer and Janelle Monae) who became instrumental in the 1960s space race, it's more a classic feel-good weepie — even more so now that half the country voted for you-know-who. Speaking of '60s race relations, one of the only Oscar races we care about is whether **"I Am Not Your Negro"** (Dec. 9) gets a nom for Best Documentary, being that it's a look at the always relevant (especially now) writer James Baldwin, who was speaking eloquently then about some of the same things Black Lives Matter members talk about now.

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FOR THOSE WHO PREFER THE ART HOUSE

Erudite viewers don't often go to the art house to laugh. But laugh they will at **"Toni Erdmann"** (Dec. 28), even though it's a three-hour comedy from Germany, not exactly the birthplace of comedy. The plot is ready-made for an Adam Sandler remake: A workaholic is none too happy when her eccentric father crashes her life, pretending to be a wealthy ambassador (or life coach, or businessman, depending who's asking), complete with a hilarious combo of bad wig and worse fake teeth. You'll laugh, you'll cry (a bit) and you might just leave thinking this silly film is a serious masterpiece.

There are plenty of name directors, too. Jim Jarmusch is back with **"Paterson"** (Dec. 28), a slow, leisurely and rich look at a week in the life of a poet/bus driver (Adam Driver, almost scarily chill). Mike Mills ("Beginners") hangs with Annette Bening, Elle Fanning and Greta Gerwig in 1970s California in **"20th Century Women"** (Dec. 28). **"I, Daniel Blake"** (Dec. 23) finds English social realist Ken Loach ("The Wind That Shakes the Barley") back to observing the plights of the working class. Pedro Almodovar has another red-hot melodrama-mystery with **"Julieta"** (Dec. 21).

You might not know the name of Chilean director Pablo Larrain, but maybe you will now. Already a great, thanks to the likes of like his Pinochet-era dramedy "No," the filmmaker has two renegade biopics. First, there's **"Jackie"** (Dec. 2), which features Natalie Portman's Oscar-talk of a turn as Mrs. Kennedy, seen in the immediate aftermath of the JFK assassination. And on Dec. 16 we get **"Neruda,"** which isn't a look at the life of poet Pablo Neruda but about the time he went underground and was hunted down by a dogged government agent (Gael Garcia Bernal).

Will Natalie Portman win her second Oscar for "Jackie," in which she plays Mrs. Kennedy post-JFK assassination? It turns out nobody knows for sure. FOX SEARCHLIGHT

FOR THOSE NOT DREADING THE JANUARY/FEBRUARY DUMPING GROUNDS

We're so happy Keanu Reeves' superassassin got himself another dog in the hotly anticipated "John Wick: Chapter 2." NICO TAVERNISE

The early months of a year are for botched New Year's resolutions — and, of course, for terrible movies that studios try to dump so they never have to think about them again. So get ready for a new **"Underworld"** (Jan. 6), a new **"Resident Evil"** (Jan. 27), a revival of the **"Amityville Horror"** (Jan. 6) and **"Monster Trucks"** (Jan. 13), which is now, apparently, a movie (with Amy Ryan). There's also something called **"A Dog's Purpose"** (Jan. 27), about a dog that keeps getting reincarnated — as more dogs.

In brighter news, a second **"Fifty Shades"** (Feb. 10) movie means more of Dakota Johnson's quietly funny work, and hopefully she won't constantly say "Crap!" in this one either. After deferring to Ice Cube for the 2005 sequel, Vin Diesel returns for **"xXx: Return of Xander Cage"** (Jan. 20), though we can't tell if his presence means the movie will be good or if his career is slipping again. We kind of liked M. Night Shyamalan's last movie — the found footage romp "The Visit" — so maybe **"Split"** (Jan. 20) will be fine, especially since it stars 23 different iterations of James McAvoy.

Honestly, though, the movie we're most excited for — maybe, if you twist our arm, more than any other film mentioned in this guide — is **"John Wick: Chapter 2"** (Feb. 10). Keanu Reeves' superassassin is back, this time with another dog, and it would just be cruel if it was as much of a disappointment as the second "Jack Reacher." Still, even if it is, we'll always have **"Rock Dog"** (Feb. 24).

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Samantha Robinson (with Jeffrey Vincent Parise) plays a witch out till find a real man in "The Love Witch," a pastiche (of sorts) of exploitation films from the '60s and '70s. OSCILLOSCOPE LABORATORIES

"The Love Witch"

Director: Anna Biller
Stars: Samantha Robinson, Jeffrey Vincent Parise
Rating: R

●●●○○

A simple wink-wink pastiche of '60s and '70s exploitation sleaze wouldn't be a bad thing. It's tricky, these films, like "The Love Witch," that try to speak in a dead cinematic language: You want to get the details right, but you don't want to leave viewers simply cackling at how the past was so weird and backward and dumb. That's something filmmaker Anna Biller miraculously, heroically avoids. If one were to make an unholy mash-up of Russ Meyer, Radley Metzger and Herschell Gordon Lewis, it would probably look exactly like "The Love Witch." The only time you can tell it wasn't made in 1971 is when someone busts out a cellphone.

Actually there are other tell-tale signs it's not the real deal. There are big things missing: the (usually female) nudity that comes early and often, the far-from-ideal gender dynamics, the constant reminder that the gaze we're looking through belongs to a male. The director is a woman, and it's a movie with more weens than boobs. This, despite being about a bodacious witch named Elaine (a very game Samantha Robinson) who uses "sex magic" to ensnare hotcha men and, invariably, kill them with love. But she means well: She genuinely wants everlasting amour, and is disappointed when her macho studs can't handle her.

The period detail is spot-on. Biller nails the artificial look of the era's drive-in fare, from the loud colors to the rear projection driving scenes to the Ennio Morricone choirs over shots where all the set lights are on full blast. The precision of the recreations can even distract you from the film's real mission, which isn't subtle: It's a feminist reworking of an old genre — and if you miss that, characters sometimes look nearly in the camera and feed you radical feminist lingo. Even that is partly done as camp — sincere and silly at the same time.

Though it may seem Biller is mounting an assault on delightfully garish exploitation fare — whose overemphatic titles include "Vixen!", "Score" and "Two Thousand Maniacs!" — that's not quite what she's doing. She clearly loves these films; she doesn't want to take them down but use their style to get at something new and fun. And it is fun watching Robinson vamp and prowl and arch her eyebrows. Elaine's not out to titillate men; she's doing it for herself. She's perversely empowered and, as the film goes on, quite sad and lonely. But that's not because she's a woman; it's because no one is as awesome as her. MATT PRIGGE

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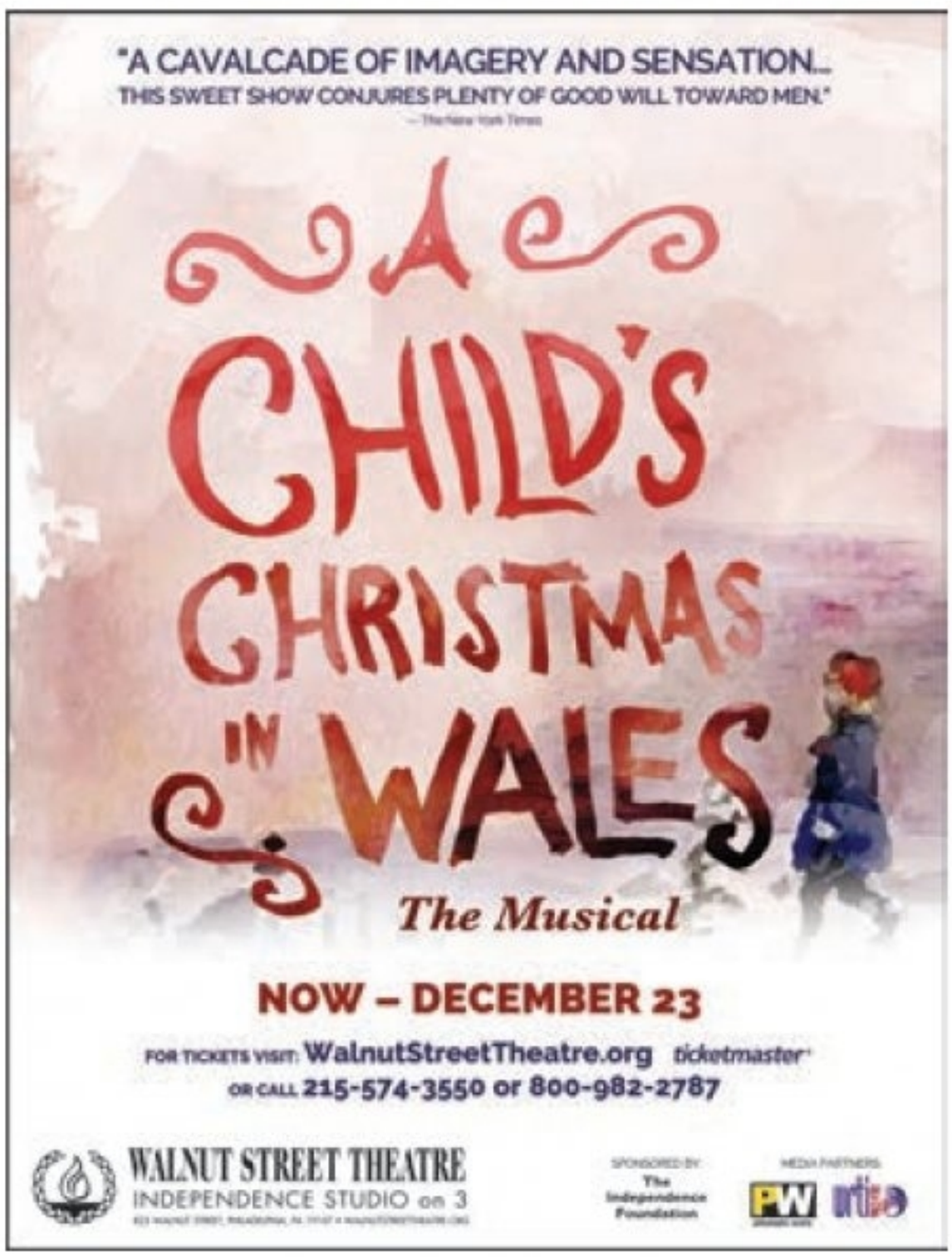
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Ryan Tedder of OneRepublic dishes on his favorite Philly spots

It's almost like he lives here.

JENNIFER LOGUE
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Rainy day blues weren't keeping OneRepublic fans down Tuesday night. The five-piece rock band, based in Los Angeles, performed an exclusive concert at The Fillmore in Philadelphia for American Airlines AAdvantage Mastercard members. The electrifying 12-song set featured hits like "Counting Stars" and "Apologize" as well as new favorites like "A.I." and "Let's Hurt Tonight" from their latest album, "Oh My My."

We got to chat with lead vocalist Ryan Tedder backstage about the historic charm of Old City, Zahav's hummus and how OneRepublic is changing up how they release music.

How's it feel to be in Philly?
Wet. [Laughs]

Ain't that the truth.
Yeah, it's a little rainy, but I have a friend here from college, so we always have a good time when we come here.

Have any favorite spots?
I like Old City and Society Hill. Super-beautiful area — historic, cobblestone streets, great restaurants. We went to Zahav last night, and that was ridiculous.

RACHEL KAPLAN

Awesome choice.
Yeah, we had raw lamb, duck hearts, really good carrots, pita bread and the best hummus I think I've ever had outside of Jerusalem. So, it was really, really good. Then I had to go for Pat's [King of Steaks] today just to keep it real. Just to get as much sodium as possible before the show.

You guys are reppin' Philly hard! Love it. So what can we expect from the show tonight?
It's going to be completely different, simply because we decided that each night — we only have a handful of these shows with American Airlines and MasterCard — we don't look at the set list until we walk right on stage. None of us have any idea with what we are playing tonight until we walk on stage.

Well, who decides the set list?
It's kind of a potluck. It's randomized to keep it interesting for us. So we get an email: "Here's the setlist." Boom.

Any plans for the holidays?
Well, we're going to be in Europe until right before Christmas. We will be in Berlin, London, Milan, Paris and then we all kind of split off and go our separate ways. I'm going straight to the mountains — I'm going to Vale. I think Brent's going to Seattle. Drew's going to Denver. Eddie's staying home. Zac is

Get ready for Latkepalooza

The latke, sometimes referred to as a potato pancake, is a classic Hanukkah dish. This shallow-fried delicacy is typically made up of shredded or mashed potato, flour, egg, garlic and onion. However, at the Gershman Y on Broad Street, the concept of a typical latke has been challenged by various Philly chefs at Latkepalooza since 2003.

Taking place Dec. 18, latkes will be prepared by each of the participating Philly restaurants, including: Circles, Estia, Frankford Hall, Jones, Kanella, Local 44, Mission Taqueria, Sabrina's Cafe and Tria Taproom. Federal Donuts will also be serving *sufganiyot*, which is a deep-fried Hanukkah doughnut filled with jelly or custard and covered in powdered sugar.

Bill Chenevert, director of public relations and marketing for the Gershman Y, says the organization is excited about restaurants adding their own style to the latke. "Estia's spanakopita [spinach pie] latke has been a crowd favorite in the past," he notes.

"The restaurants tend to get really fun and creative with what they can do in terms of a topping or a sauce," Chenevert adds.

Being a very kid-friendly event, there will be plenty to do besides eating latkes.

The Plants, a Philly children's band, will be playing a mix of funk, folk, Motown and rock music at the event. There will also be Hanukkah-themed crafts and balloon artistry for the kids to enjoy.

Tickets for the event can be purchased online or by calling the Gershman Y. The $20 general admission ticket is redeemable for 10 latkes. Toddlers under 2 years old can eat three latkes for free, and kids 2 to 12 years old can eat seven latkes for $15. ZARI TARAZONA

Latkepalooza

The Gershman Y
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Register online or call 215-545-4400

OneRepublic rocked the Fillmore for an exclusive concert this past Tuesday LISA LAKE/WIREIMAGE

going to Indiana. I'll be in the mountains then back to Cali.

So after the holidays wrap up, what's next for the band?

We have a tour planned. We have a lot of people online asking what the dates are. I'm not allowed to say what the dates are yet but it is obviously 2017 in the first half of the year. It will be in the U.S. and most likely everywhere — we just don't know timing of everything. That's coming up and then a handful of one-off, random dates and honestly, more writing. It's funny, as we were finishing the album the whole idea of disappearing for two or three years, then making an album and coming back — it already feels like an old way of doing things. So, we are more focused on constantly putting out new music.

For more on OneRepublic, visit: onerepublic.com.

Feast your eyes on these latkes. MARIO MANZONI

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3 Things the Eagles must do to beat the Bengals in Week 13

The Eagles need to get to Andy Dalton Sunday if they want to get back to the .500 mark.

EVAN MACY
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The Eagles typically mighty pass rush has been nearly nonexistent as the Birds have gone 2-6 over their last eight games. GETTY IMAGES

Technically the Eagles are still very much alive in the hunt for a playoff spot.

Their Week 12 loss to the Packers was a major setback, and the 5-6 squad is up against the wall — but stranger things have happened.

In order to win an NFC wild card spot, Philadelphia will need to win out and get to 10-6 (along with a boatload of help). With a road trip to Cincinnati Sunday (at 1 p.m. on Fox) the Eagles can build some confidence against the only sub .500 team left on their schedule.

Here's a look at three things the team will need to do to prevail against the Bengals:

1 Stop the penalties

Take away some of the Eagles biggest, most devastating penalties on the defensive side of the ball and statistically the Birds are among the best — if not the best — defenses in football. The team would also have a much better win-loss record.

In their 24-13 loss last week, a few key mistakes by Fletcher Cox cost the Eagles their best chance to win. This needs to stop.

"It's a competitive game," Eagles defensive coordinator Jim Schwartz said. "You're going to get a defensive hold or a pass interference if you're playing tight coverage. You're going to get some hits on the quarterback that are sort of unavoidable, but there's plenty that have been avoidable, and when we've committed those, it's put our team at risk and we haven't won games as a result. They are hard lessons to learn, but for us to get to where we want to get to as a defense and as a team, we have to put that behind us."

2 Score more points

The Eagles haven't scored more than 24 points since Week 3. Not surprisingly, they've gone 2-6 in that span. Injuries have hit the offense hard, as have drops, penalties and questionable coaching decisions. The Bengals (3-7-1) defense is toward the lower middle of the pack in terms of its points allowed and yards allowed. This week, Carson Wentz will need to show up.

"Obviously, as an offense, our job is to put points on the board, and that just comes from executing one play at a time," offensive coordinator Frank Reich said. "We have to score more points. I mean, there's no question. As coaches, it's our job to put our players in the best position to make plays and to be able to sustain drives; to be good in the red zone; be good on third down. Obviously [it's also the] players' job, but really we're all in it together as an offense. We just have to find ways to be better."

3 Get to the quarterback

Remember when the Eagles defensive line was one of the most feared in the NFL? Well, it's mustered just six sacks over the last five games.

Cox, one of the league's newly-minted, highest-paid superstars, has more personal fouls than sacks in that span — and a prolific start to the season by Brandon Graham has slowed to a proverbial crawl.

The Bengals have allowed 32 sacks, fourth most in the league and their lackluster offensive line will allow the Eagles to get to Andy Dalton — if they can get their act together.

"We haven't had sacks the last couple weeks," Schwartz said. "We need sacks to be able to help our team. That puts them in third down-and-longs; it gets off the field on third-and-long; it forces turnovers. We haven't forced turnovers the last couple weeks."

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Dolphins at Ravens (-3.5)
The Dolphins have caught fire, winning six straight games, yet are considerable underdogs against the mediocre Ravens. Though Baltimore's rush defense can be stingy (best in the league at just 74.7 YPG allowed), Jay Ajayi and the Dolphins have taken it to some of the better run stoppers in the league during their six-game run, including the top-10 rated Steelers, Jets and Chargers.

And while the Ravens defense is among the better units in the league at preventing points (18.3 PPG allowed, fourth-best in the NFL), Baltimore's offense, led by Joe Flacco, has been very shaky. Just last week, they squandered many an offensive opportunity in a 19-14 win over Cincinnati and had to have kicker Justin Tucker more or less win the game for them. Miami's pass stoppers are among the best in the league (ninth), so Flacco could be in for even more headaches on Sunday. The Dolphins are the best bet of the week.
The pick: Dolphins +3.5

Buffalo Bills at Oakland Raiders (-3)
The Raiders have won eight of their last nine games (including this current five-game winning streak) and look like one of the elite teams in the AFC. Meanwhile, the Bills continue to get credit for playing hard and keeping games close but have failed to cover in four of their last five contests.

Buffalo's wins over Cincinnati (off a bye week, no less) and Jacksonville in successive weeks were not that impressive, while Oakland has beaten (in order) Denver, Houston and a desperate Carolina team; a demanding feat.

Go with Latavius Murray and the Raiders at home. GETTY IMAGES

Latavius Murray should exploit the Bills' porous rush defense (20th by YPG), enabling Derek Carr to torch Buffalo through the air when he has to go there. LeSean McCoy and the Bills' rushing attack will keep them alive for a while, but if the Raiders can figure out Cam Newton, they can figure out Tyrod Taylor, too. Eventually Buffalo will have to abandon the run and try to play catch-up, and that's when the Raiders will start to pull away. Lay the points with the team that's currently best in the west.
The pick: Raiders -3

Redskins at Cardinals (-2.5)
These two clubs couldn't be trending any more differently at the moment. The Redskins have covered in eight of their last nine contests (and four of their last five on the road), while the Cardinals have dropped their last five games ATS. And Arizona can't take any solace in returning to Glendale after two demoralizing road losses in a row, as they're just 3-7 ATS in their last 10 home tilts.

Because of all this, Washington looks like a good bet even though their second-ranked offense by YPG meets the NFL's most uncompromising defense by the same measure. Expect Kirk Cousins and company to collect another win to stay afloat in the playoff hunt while effectively sinking the Cardinals.
The pick: Redskins +2.5

Best of the rest

Los Angeles Rams @ **New England Patriots** (-13.5)
Detroit Lions @ New Orleans Saints (-6)
Philadelphia Eagles @ Cincinnati Bengals (-1)
Houston Texans @ Green Bay Packers (-6.5)
Kansas City Chiefs @ **Atlanta Falcons** (-3.5)
Denver Broncos (-4) @ Jacksonville Jaguars
San Francisco 49ers @ **Chicago Bears** (-1)
New York Giants @ **Pittsburgh Steelers** (-6)
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Jahlil Okafor and Nerlens Noel

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The Sixers third big man is finally back — giving the team a complicated way forward.

EVAN MACY
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Nerlens Noel was called up from the D-league after a brief stint for rehab Thursday, uniting the Sixers trio of high-potential and youthful big men.

Noel will join the current Rookie of the Year front-runner Joel Embiid and Jahlil Okafor, amid a squad that will have seven players 6-foot-10 or higher on it when Ben Simmons returns from injury.

The assumption is that Noel is on the trading block. He himself admitted it during the preseason, before getting minor surgery that kept him out for the last month, telling media members that there was no way the current roster makeup would continue and something had to give.

"I don't think the roster's changed," Noel said when he got back to the Sixers' practice facility Thursday.

But the team has changed.

Career stats

Joel Embiid: 12 games, 18.2 PPG, 7.8 RPG, 2.4 BPG (in 22 minutes per game)

Nerlens Noel: 142 games, 10.5 PPG, 8.1 RPG, 1.7 BPG (in 30 minutes per game)

Jahlil Okafor: 70 games, 15.9 PPG, 6.3 RPG, 1.1 BPG (in 28 minutes per game)

Many expect Noel will be the odd man out, but perhaps not. Okafor and Embiid have alternated playing center with the two avoiding playing at the same time (though that will change sometime soon). Last season Okafor and Noel played together a few times but it was an unsuccessful pairing in the front court.

Okafor proved to be a lackluster defender but natural scorer last season and continues to be a bit of a defensive liability. Noel has been a rim protector and excellent defender, who has average scoring ability.

Embiid, it seems after 12 games of spectacular play in limited minutes, is the full package.

With Dario Saric looking like a potential starting front court player for years to come and Simmons, who the Sixers assume will pick up a big scoring and facilitating role as a point-forward (or possibly point guard), Noel's defense could be a welcome addition once the Sixers reach contention.

There also could be some extra chemistry between Embiid and Noel if the two pair up. According to Sixers.com's Brian Seltzer: "Noel called Joel Embiid one of his best friends. Happy to see him on floor, having success. Can relate to what he went through with injuries."

Which means Okafor, not Noel, could be the man on the block.

Head coach Brett Brown will continue to tinker with the roster with different combinations and see what can work and will not work. The Sixers will be watching every move their big men make as the February trade deadline approaches, and if pulling the trigger helps the team, they'll do so.

The Kings, Celtics and Lakers have been the main teams with trade buzz related to Philadelphia. Stay tuned as the rumors continue to swirl this winter.

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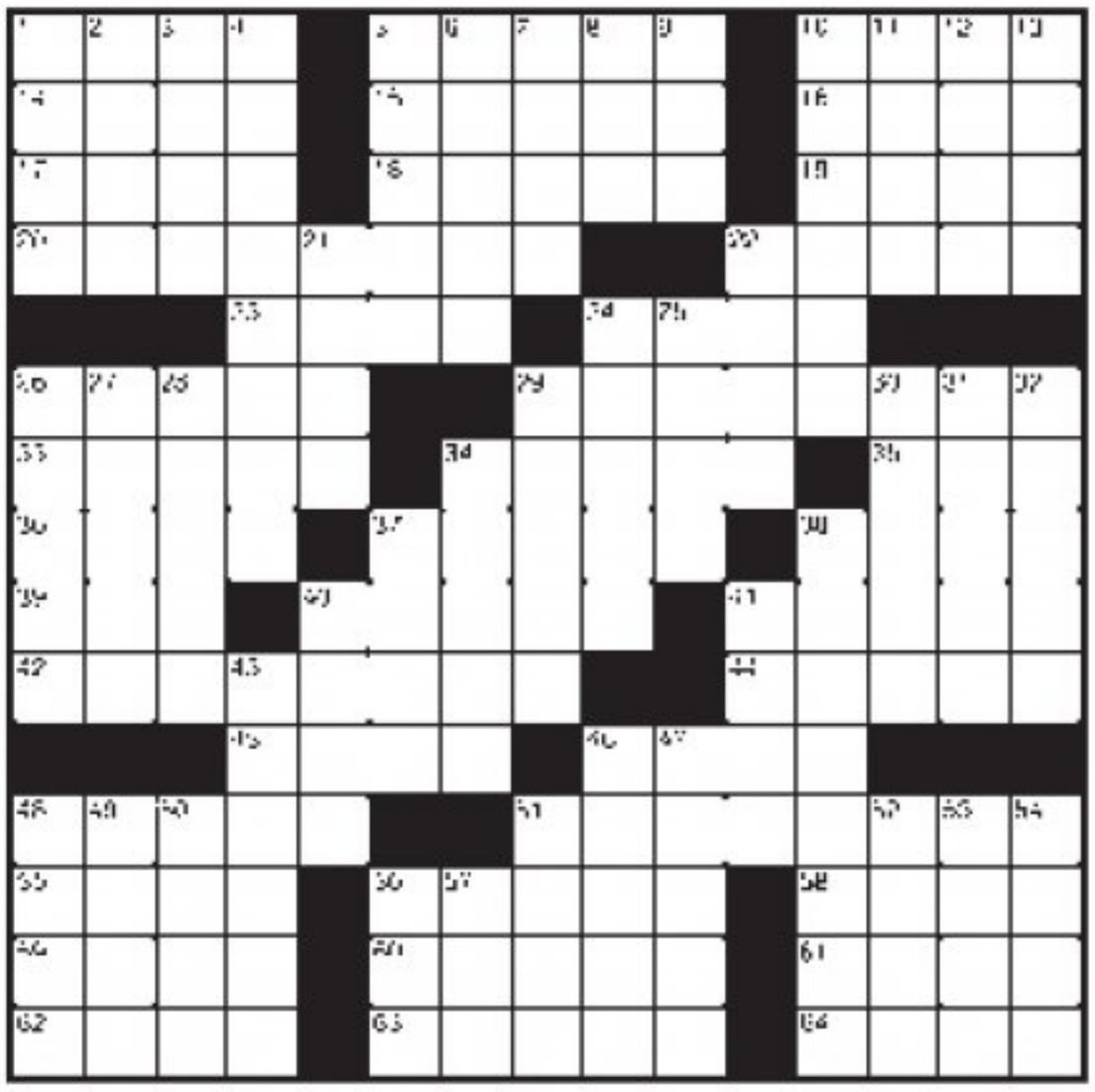

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18 Weight unit
19 Thursday eponym
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22 Cuba neighbor
23 Took to court
24 Sir's companion
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29 Most humble
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34 Gauguin and Simon
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36 Like a bow string
37 Lightbulb units
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39 Turtle-to-be
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41 Jangle
42 Go over the lines
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45 Omigosh!
46 Hairy twin
48 Strongly advises
51 Confronting boldly
55 Hoodwink
56 Does perfectly
58 Goddess's statue
59 All, in combos
60 Tells all
61 A Saarinen
62 Nut, actually
63 Groom a horse
64 Widen a hole

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3 Kinds of eagles
4 Seasons firewood (2 wds.)
5 Hacienda brick
6 Is willing to
7 Ms. Hathaway
8 Big bird of myth
9 Sooner than
10 Japanese mat
11 Pre-college
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13 Hatcher or Garr
21 Stray dog
22 Greer and Roach
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27 Phase
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